

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-10 NSC-05

CIAE-00 /048 W

-----041983 181700Z /47 S

R 180830Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5942

SECDEF

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

CHUSMTM DHAHRAN

DOD/ISA

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAMA 0660

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BA, SA

SUBJECT: BAHRAINI ARMS REQUESTS

REF: JIDDA 1545 (NOTAL)

1. I MET AT MY REQUEST MARCH 14 WITH SHAIKH HAMAD BIN ISA, HEIR APPARENT/DEFENSE MINISTER, TO DISCUSS NUMBER OF PENDING BDF REQUESTS, PARTICULARLY HELICOPTERS, 2.75 IN. ROCKETS, LAW, AND HAWK. UNUSUALLY, SHAIKH HAMAD WAS LATE FOR APPOINTMENT AND ARRIVED AT HIS OFFICE WITH PRIME MINISTER IN TOW. PRIME MINISTER MADE STRONG PLEA FOR FASTER ACTION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF LIMITED ARMS RELATIONSHIP TO WHICH USG HAS AGREED. HE STRESSED BAHRAIN'S NEED AND RIGHT TO SOME DEFENSIVE CAPABILITY, PARTICULARLY MODERN AIR DEFENSE. PRIME MINISTER SAID HE FELT THAT NATURE OF OUR RELATIONS JUSTIFIED BAHRAIN'S EXPECTATION THAT USG WILL ASSIST IN THIS EFFORT, AND DO SO ON TIMELY BASIS.

2. SHAIKH HAMAD INTERJECTED THAT HE HOPED PENDING REQUESTS WOULD BE MOVED MORE QUICKLY THAN WAS DEFENSE SURVEY ON WHICH

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THEY ARE BASED. BOTH PRIME MINISTER AND SHAIKH HAMAD PRESSED STRONGLY FOR RAPID AND POSITIVE RESPONSE ON HAWK SYSTEM. BOTH STRESSED CONCEPT OF REGIONAL DEFENSE AND BAHRAIN'S DESIRE TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE THEREIN WITH PURELY DEFENSIVE HAWK SYSTEM.

3. LATER, AFTER PRIME MINISTER LEFT MEETING, SHAIKH HAMAD

MADE IT CLEAR THAT IN HIS VIEW AND VIEW OF HIS OFFICERS ACQUISITION OF HAWK IS MOST IMPORTANT PENDING ISSUE. HE SAID HE AND HIS OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT MODERN AIR DEFENSE REQUIRES COMBINATION OF CONVENTIONAL A/A AND EITHER FIGHTERS OR MISSILES. CONVENTIONAL A/A ALONE IS NOT PROPER AIR DEFENSE. COMMENT. ACQUISITION OF HAWK HAS BECOME FOR HEIR APPARENT/DEFENSE MINISTER TEST OF OUR WILLINGNESS SERIOUSLY TO TREAT WITH BDF NEED FOR REAL RATHER THAN TOKEN AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITY. SHAIKH HAMAD MADE IT ALL BUT EXPLICIT THAT HIS OFFICERS' VIEWS OF HIS ABILITIES AS DEFENSE MINISTER ARE ON THE LINA ON THIS QUESTION. END COMMENT.

4. I TOLD PRIME MINISTER AND SHAIKH HAMAD THAT QUESTION OF HAWK WAS BEING STUDIED AT, FIRST, LEVEL OF TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY AND, LATER, IF IT IS FAASIBLE, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED IN TERMS WIDER USG ARMS SALES POLICIES. BOTH MEN REFERRED TO NATURE OF USG-GOB RELATIONSHIP (US NAVY IMPLIED BUT NOT STATED) AND DEGREE TO WHICH WE HAVE HELPED OTHER SMALL STATES IN AREA, KUWAIT AND OMAN IN PARTICULAR, AND EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT THEIR MODEST REQUESTS SHOULD BE MET. I SAID I WOULD OF COURSE REPORT THEIR VIEWS AND SEEK AN EARLY REPORT ON STATUS OF HAWK STUDY. PRIME MINISTER LEFT AT THIS POINT AND SHAIKH HAMAD AND I REVIEWED OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES.

5. HELICOPTERS AND 2.75 INCH ROCKETS. I EXPLAINED DIFFERING SAG AND USG VIEWS ON PURCHASE AND DELIVERY PROCEDURES FOR THESE  
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ITEMS. SHAIKH HAMAD SAID HE WOULD FOR MOST PART PREFER OUR APPROACH, DIRECT PURCHASE AND DELIVERY, BUT MADE IT CLEAR HE WAS IN NO POSITION TO PRESS THIS ON SAG. HE THEN INTRODUCED NEW CONSIDERATION: THAT HELICOPTERS NORMALLY SHIPPED IN AT LEAST PARTIALLY DISASSEMBLED FORM AND IT MAKES SENSE TO HAVE HELICOPTERS RECEIVED AT RSAF BASE IN DHAHRAN, ASSEMBLED THERE AND FLOWN TO BAHRAIN. RSAF HAS ADEQUATE FACILITIES IN DHAHRAN FOR THIS PROCEDURE. ACCORDING TO SHAIKH HAMAD, WHILE BDF MAY NOT BE UP TO RECEIPT AND ASSEMBLY BY TIME FIRST HELICOPTERS ARRIVE.

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R 180830Z MAR 78  
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CHUSMTM DHAHRAN  
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6. IN ANY EVENT, SHAIKH HAMAD SAID IT WAS UP TO SAG AND USG TO SETTLE DELIVERY METHOD. HE WOULD SIGN WHATEVER IS NECESSARY, OF COURSE, AND HE HOPED PROCESS COULD BE MOVED AHEAD EXPEDITIOUSLY. I SUGGESTED TO HIM THAT PERHAPS BEST APPROACH ON HELICOPTERS WOULD BE (1) TO CONFIRM NORMAL STATE OF ASSEMBLY OF NEW HELICOPTERS AND (2), TO DISCUSS QUESTION AGAIN WITH SAG WITH VIEW TO SETTLING ISSUE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. RFAKETS OF COURSE ARE DIFFERENT AND IF SAG WOULD AGREE DIRECT DELIVERY WOULD PRESENT NO PROBLEMS.

7. ORDER FOR LAW MISSILES. I REFERRED TO HIS REQUEST FOR 5,000 MORE LAW MISSILES, PLUS 2000 PRACTICE ROCKETS, AND OUR REQUEST FOR JUSTIFICATION FOR SO LARGE A NUMBER. SHAIKH HAMAD SAID LETTER TO ME WAS BEING DRAFTED. HE SAID THAT HE EXPECTS TO ISSUE LAW WIDELY WITHIN BDF, THAT BDF HAS BEEN PRACTICING EXTENSIVELY WITH LAW, AND THAT LARGE ORDER NOW REFLECTS THESE FACTORS, PLUS BDF'S SATISFACTION WITH LAW AND ITS DESIRE ACQUIRE GOOD SIZE STOPCKILE. COMMENT. BELIEVE FOREGOING IS ALL WE ARE LIKELY TO GET IN WAY OF JUSTIFICATION UNLESS, PERHAPS, OUR REQUEST FOR "FULL MILITARY JUSTIFICATION" (STATE

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27553) IS MUCH MORE DETAILED. END COMMENT.

8. REQUEST FOR ACTION: I-HAWK. PLEASE PROVIDE STATUS OF FEASIBILITY STUDY AND BEST TENTATIVE JUDGMENT ON LIKELIHOOD THAT, IF TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE, BDF MIGHT BE ABLE ACQUIRE, SAY, ONE BATTERY FULLY INTEGRATED WITH SAG EASTERN PROVINCE AIR DEFENSE. IN ADDITION TO FACTORS GIVEN ABOVE IN PARA 3, DEPT WILL RECALL THAT IDEA OF HAWK SYSTEM HERE WAS PUT TO US BY GOB IN CONTEXT OF OUR OWN POLICY OF ENCOURAGING REGIONAL

DEFENSE COOPERATION. BAHRAIN'S PROXIMITY TO SAUDI OIL FIELDS, ITS OWN RELIANCE ON OUTPUT OF ONE OF THOSE FIELDS, AND ITS FUTURE CAUSEWAY LINK WITH EASTERN PROVINCE GIVE CONSIDERABLE PLAUSIBILITY TO ITS DESIRE TO HELP IN REGIONAL AIR DEFENSE.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: HELICOPTERS AND 2.75 ROCKETS. FROM REFTEL AND PREVIOUS IT APPEARS THAT WE AND SAG HAVE REACHED STALEMATE, AT LEAST AT LEVEL AT WHICH WE HAVE DISCUSSED PURCHASE AND DELIVERY OF HELICOPTERS AND ROCKETS. WOULD APPRECIATE JIDDA AND DEPT CONSIDERING APPROACH AT PRINCE SULTAN LEVEL IN ORDER RESOLVE THIS ISSUE SOON. IF HELICOPTERS DO INDEED ARRIVE DISASSEMBLED, AND IF RSAF DHAHRAN IS LOGICAL PLACE TO RECEIVE AND ASSEMBLE THEM, THEN PERHAPS WE SHOULD CONSIDER AGREEING TO THIS AND, IN EXCHANGE, GET SAG TO AGREE TO DIRECT PURCHASE AND DELIVERY OF ROCKETS, THEREBY SETTING AT LEAST SOME PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE DIRECT DELIVERY OF OTHER SAUDI-FINANCED ARMS FOR BDF (VULCANS, FOR EXAMPLE).  
CLUVERIUS

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## Message Attributes

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